DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 224 239 EC 150 623

AUTHOR Sapon-Shevin, Mara
TITLE Mainstreaming: Implications for Reconceptualizing Schooling. Incidental Papers. Reports of the Deans' Grants: 6.
PUB DATE 1 Apr 81
NOTE 31p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Orthopsychiatric Association (58th, April 1, 1981). For related documents, see EC 150 621-626.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Accountability; Compliance (Legal); *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; Federal Legislation; *Individualized Instruction; Interdisciplinary Approach; Interpersonal Competence; *Parent School Relationship; Program Implementation; *Social Environment; *Special Education
IDENTIFIERS Deans Grants Program; *Education for All Handicapped Children Act

ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on differences between regular and special education and suggests ways in which the principles of P.L. 94-142 (the Education For All Handicapped Children Act) can be extended to the education of nonhandicapped students. Special education as mandated by P.L. 94-142 differs from regular education in six dimensions: mandate for appropriate education, emphasis on individualization, attention to the social climate and to social goals, the role of the parents in the educational process, staffing patterns and interdisciplinary process, and accountability. Applications to regular education of these principles would result in a variety of changes, including reduced class sizes, development and implementation of social skills curricula, use of release time to allow teachers to meet with parents, increased interdisciplinary consultation, and greater accountability for student outcomes. Impediments to such changes exist, but the benefits of extending the merits of P.L. 94-142 to all of education are great. (CL)

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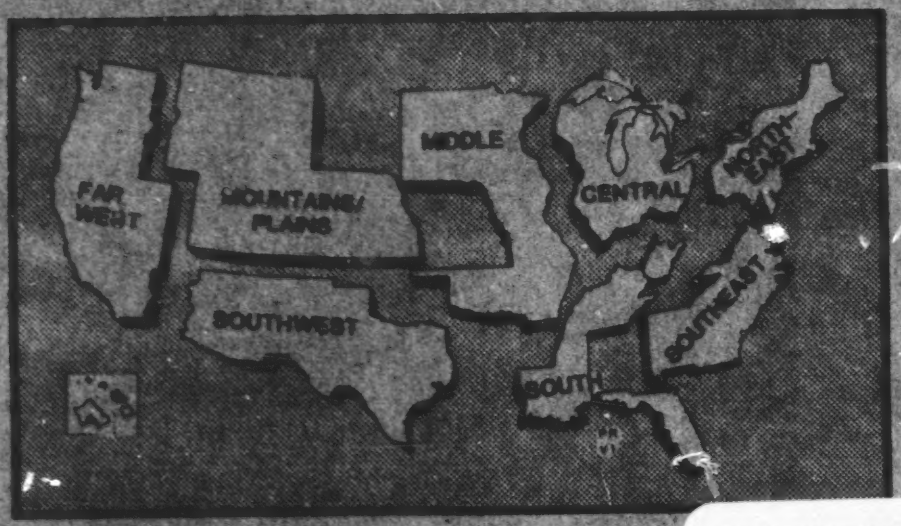

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Minneapolis, Minnesota

1982

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MAINSTREAMING:

IMPLICATIONS FOR RECONCEPTUALIZING SCHOOLING

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Presented at the 58th Annual Meeting of The American Orthopsychiatric Association
April 1, 1981.

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MAINSTREAMING:

IMPLICATIONS FOR RECONCEPTUALIZING SCHOOLING

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INTRODUCTION

Although the theoretical and philosophical bases for mainstreaming are extensive, many school systems have responded to the pressure of federal legislation by viewing P.L. 94-142, The Education of Handicapped Children Act of 1975, as just one more regulation to be complied with. Workshops for administrators and upper-echelon school personnel often focus almost exclusively on satisfying the legal requirements of testing, placements and due process, and little, if any, attention is paid to the more substantive changes which are an underlying part of the mandates of the mainstreaming movement. Given school districts' long history of being asked to meet state and federal guidelines with little lead time, few provisions for additional personnel and limited understanding of the rationale underlying the mandated change, it is not surprising that many view mainstreaming as yet another demand of the federal government which "shall also pass," and which does not necessitate extensive re-working of broader educational issues.

Reynolds[12] points to the dangers and limited impact of doing only as much as is required to "stay out of jail," without serious attention to the need for underlying change:

> "Progress in trying to implement massive new procedures is best assured when the legal imperative is matched with a strong developmental effort and the latter reaches down to fundamentals rather than just surface compliance efforts." (p. 113)

When viewed in its more limited sense, compliance with P.L. 94-142 means addressing past grievances related to the identification, placement,

and education of handicapped children. As such, it has direct impact on only a limited number of children, parents, and school personnel. It is possible, however, to view P.L. 94-142 and the mainstreaming movement as having potential impact on all facets of education; it can provide an opportunity for a reconceptualization of education that will affect all children, all parents, and all school personnel. If we are indeed able, as Reynolds suggests, "to reach down to fundamentals," then we may be able to perceive P.L. 94-142 as a catalyst for change at many levels of the educational system. The need to re-examine our attitudes, responsibilities and behavior towards the subset of children identified as "handicapped" may force us to also re-examine the impact of our educational system on all children.

This paper will examine the major features and goals of special education as mandated by P.L. 94-142, contrast these to the features and goals of regular education, and then explore what schools would look like if they extended to non-disabled children the same kind of educational programming demanded for exceptional children by P.L. 94-142. Major obstacles to changing education in these ways will then be identified, and the paper will conclude with a plea for changing the ways in which we conceptualize education in both social and political contexts.

Prominent differences between regular education and special education as mandated by P.L. 94-142 can be seen in six major areas, many of which are also linked to the law's requirement of an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) for each student. These areas are:

1. the mandate for "appropriate" education
2. an emphasis on individualization

3. attention to the social climate and to social goals
4. the role of parents in the educational process
5. staffing patterns and interdisciplinary process
6. accountability

CONTRASTING REGULAR AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Appropriate Education

The law demands that exceptional children be provided with an "appropriate" education. This has been interpreted to mean an education which meets a student's educational needs, regardless of the extent to which these needs coincide with existing curricula or traditional areas of schooling.[11] If, for example, children need instruction in the area of self-feeding or toilet training, they are to be provided with an education in those areas, even though those are not part of the standardized curriculum.

No such demands for personalization or relevance are traditionally placed on regular education programs. Students take courses offered by the school, and the courses that are offered are based on decisions made by curriculum committees and school boards. Although students might be offered some choices within existing programs (vocational versus college preparatory) within these broadly defined alternatives, few choices are available. Students who perceive that their needs are not being met within the confines of academic schooling often leave at age sixteen to attempt to have these needs met elsewhere. Until age sixteen, numerous children simply bide their time in traditional programs, often failing and displaying problem social behaviors.

Individualized Instruction

Linked to the demands for an "appropriate" education, IEP regulations demand that educational programs for exceptional children be individualized, at least on paper. Each child's needs are examined on an individual basis, and although grouping may occur later when individuals are adjudged to have similar needs, the discussion of the personal requirements of each child must occur first. It is often stated that one of the goals of special education is to help each child to reach his/her full potential.

Ironically, the goal of educating children to "reach their full potential" is generally reserved for those children from whom the potential is seen as somehow limited. Traditional education tends to make decisions on the basis of perceived group needs or group norms, and little attention is paid to individual differences. Attempts by regular education programs to help children reach their full potential are constrained by the limitations of conflicting priorities and limited resources. The goal is actually then, "to help each child reach as full a potential as can be reached in thirty-student classes using standardized curricula and traditional methods."

Social Environment

Another important difference between regular and special education is the perceived role of the social environment as part of education and the importance of social skills objectives as part of curricula. Blatt states, "Special education has sought to subordinate typical curricular goals to the objectives of social growth and interpersonal relationships."[4] (p. 496) In special education settings, as an extension of the concept of appropriate education and of individualization, the law specifies that handicapped

children must be educated in the "least restrictive environment," or "to the maximum extent possible with non-handicapped children."[7] This priority recognizes that schools are more than storehouses of academic information which must be passed on to children, and that the social environment in which children function is extremely important to both their day to day existence in schools and their long-term educational growth. It is not at all uncommon for objectives in the area of social behavior to be part of a child's IEP, including friendship skills or cooperative behavior. This priority, coupled with the goal of helping exceptional children reach their full potential, often contributes to special education settings that actively encourage peer interaction and positive social behaviors.

The priorities of regular education are often different, however. Social behavior is seen as a secondary, subsidiary goal to the real purposes of schooling Children's social interactions are often viewed as extraneous to, often in conflict with, the pursuit of academic excellence.[8] Competitive classrooms in which children strive to out-do one another, often under instruction to do so by the teacher, are not atypical.

Parent Participation

Another requirement of 94-142 and a component of the IEP process is the involvement of parents in the educational planning for their children. Parents must be informed and must agree to every aspect of their child's education; they must be informed of educational testing used for the purposes of placement; they must be invited to attend the meeting at which their child's educational program is discussed; and they must offer final approval of the placement and programming proposed for their child. Furthermore, their

consent can be withdrawn at any time during the process. An elaborate system of due process safeguards protects the right of the parent, and by extension, the child.[18]

The involvement of many parents in the "regular" education of their children is extremely limited. The roles which parents are asked and encouraged to assume are often limited to room mother, cookie supplier, and field trip chaperone. Parents are not required by law to be informed in any substantive way about their child's educational program, they are not asked for approval prior to testing which is used for in-class placement (reading and math groups, for example), and they have no legal recourse for demanding that their son or daughter be switched from the "Bluebirds" to the "Robins." Although all parents do have some legal rights (the Buckley Amendment,[7] for example), schools are not required by law to inform parents of these rights in the same way that they are required to inform the parents of exceptional children about their rights.[18]

Interdisciplinary Programming

Another component of the IEP process is interdisciplinary planning by professionals. It is not uncommon for an IEP meeting to be attended by a school psychologist, a speech therapist, a social worker, and an occupational therapist, in addition to classroom teachers, an administrator, and the child's parents. These professionals are asked to reflect on the child's needs as they see them, and then to compare their perceptions to those of their colleagues. Unilateral decision-making is uncommon; several professionals are often asked to take responsibility for the educational program of the child. Reynolds[12] refers to the need for consultation between

regular education teachers and other professionals; he states, "expertise must be considered as part of a common pool to which all teachers contribute and from which all teachers may draw." (p. 114)

Two aspects of regular education programs are prominently different. First, although the child may interact with professionals in various areas (music, art, physical education), etc., these professionals rarely, if ever, interact systematically concerning the particular child, and even more rarely plan together to implement programs. Secondarily, students in regular education classrooms often have decisions made concerning their placement and programming by one individual - their classroom teacher. Occasionally, teachers reach these decisions in teams, but often such judgements are made on the basis of one individual's information and opinion.

Accountability

The IEP developed for an exceptional child is not legally binding, as such; that is, it does not represent a written contract between the school district and the parent. It does, however, often function in a similar way. Because the IEP explicitly lists measurable objectives, the person responsible for having these objectives met, and the date at which it is expected these objectives will be fulfilled, the IEP document can function as an informal contract, making both responsibilities and intended outcomes explicit. Although there is nothing to stop professionals from declaring that "the child failed to meet any of the listed objectives" (and they often do), it is not uncommon for the IEP to be seen as a shared responsibility and for professionals to assume at least some of the responsibility for whether or not objectives are met.[18]

In regular education, there is no such contractual agreement, even an informal one. Because no specific document has been drawn up detailing objectives, evaluation procedures and responsible personnel, evaluation generally focuses exclusively on the student. Students are judged according to whether or not they met the objectives decided upon by the teacher (and not necessarily agreed upon by the student or the parents!). Interestingly, this is also changing, as several recent law suits have questioned the responsibility of the schools to produce literate, competent graduates.

LESSENING THE DISCREPANCY

Clearly then, there are differences between traditionally conceived "regular education" and the educational practices mandated and/or suggested by P.L. 94-142.

In some instances, the discrepancy between much of what is current in regular education, and special education as it is envisioned in P.L. 94-142 is leading to a substantial backlash movement. One hears remarks such as, "Why should we spend all that money on your kid just because he's handicapped? What about my kid?" or "If my son were identified as 'learning disabled' or 'mentally retarded' they'd be having meetings about him, making him a special program, and making sure he succeeded - instead, they just told me he's normal but slow and he's sitting in class failing." The anger of some of the parents of regular education students is understandable - they are dissatisfied with the education of their own children and see another group receiving attention and services they would like for their child (without, of course, the stigma of being a parent of a handicapped child).

This form of backlash can take the form of "let's stop giving all that money/time/attention to those few kids." An alternative response is to attempt to diminish the differences between regular and special education.

Eliminating these differences can take two forms: making regular education more like special education or making special education more like regular education. Let us examine both alternatives.

Many aspects of P.L. 94-142 indicate that one of the goals of education for exceptional children is to provide them with a "normalized" school experience. The "least restrictive environment" clause, which is interpreted as a mandate for mainstreaming, states that "to the maximum extent possible non-handicapped children should be educated with their non-handicapped peers."[10] What does that mean, in practice? Ideally, this can be interpreted to mean that the typical activities we associate with going to school should be a part of the school experience of handicapped children as well. So, if most children ride the bus to school, so should handicapped children; if most children are able to choose to participate in extra-curricular activities, handicapped children should be provided with this opportunity as well. When one hears about normalization, references are generally made to the positive or at least neutral aspects of schooling we have all experienced: class parties and field trips, assemblies, lining up, taking gym, etc. It must be acknowledged, however, that many aspects of "the normal school experience" are not positive or pleasurable. Does normalization mean that we want all children to have the experiences of being bored, verbally abused, or teased, simply because these are typical experiences?

At a broader level, the crises many of our schools are currently experiencing make them crowded, under-staffed, unpleasant and sometimes dangerous

places to be. Lately, schools have been frequently accused of failing to provide even basic skill training for many students. Should we bring special students into these settings simply because this is what other students are experiencing? As I write this, many schools are again facing the dual crises of inadequate budgets or pressures to desegregate their schools after years of resistance. Bringing special education students into these settings can be likened to adding deck chairs on the Titanic so that all can have an equal view.

Another way to make special education and regular education more "alike" is proposed by Ensher[6], who states: "The promise of mainstreaming is that 'special' will be the character of all schools and as an adjective need not refer to either programs or children." (p. 490)

ANOTHER LOOK AT REGULAR EDUCATION

What would our schools look like if we were to make regular education look more like special education, and what changes would we have to make? A movement for change of this sort could take place in several ways: in a formal way which would demand that all students have IEP's written for them, or in a less systemitized fashion, which might involve modifications at many levels. In either case, the following changes would need to be made:

Increased attention to what constitutes "appropriate" education for each student.

This has extensive implications for:

1. How we assess current student knowledge/performance; and
2. The extent to which we ask for student and parent input into what they consider to be worthwhile, relevant goals.

Increased individualized instruction.

Individualized instruction in this case does not mean putting each student through the same pre-specified curriculum at his/her own pace; rather it meshes with the concept of appropriate education described above, and implies that serious attention will be paid not only to individualized goals, but also to the development of teaching techniques appropriate to student learning styles and characteristics. Clearly, this has implications for:

1. The size of classes. Regular education teachers often say disparagingly about their special education colleagues, "Well, I could do a lot more too if I only had eight students in my class." The question must be raised - is there any student who would not profit from a reduced class size and more individual teacher attention?

2. The number of teachers needed. For many years the media (and schools of education) have reported a teacher surplus. What does this mean? Certainly it does not mean we have too many teachers for the number of students we have who need to learn. It means that we have more teachers than school systems are willing to hire. The economic and political distinctions between these two statements must be considered carefully.

3. The need to explore alternate teaching strategies, methods and materials. The same reading book (or even the same reading series) can not possibly be right for all the

children in a class or school district, and yet such global decisions are often made by school staff and school boards.

4. The ways in which we group children. Although homogeneous grouping for instruction is widely practiced, research does not support its efficiency for average and low achieving children. Research in fact, supports the superiority of deliberately heterogeneous groups for both academic achievement and positive social interaction.[9,19]

5. The ways in which we isolate, segregate and label children who are considered to be typical. Although many are now sensitized to the prejudicial, stigmatizing consequences of using labels such as, "mentally retarded" or "delinquent" or "crippled", there are any number of labels used to refer to "typical" children which, although considered acceptable, nevertheless serve to isolate and segregate children or to establish preconceived expectations for their behavior.[13] Rist's[13] landmark longitudinal study demonstrated the extent to which the assignment of students to labeled reading groups (within regular education) both became highly stigmatizing and resulted in long-term unequal and dehumanizing treatment.

Attention to the social climate of the schools and the social behavior displayed by students.

If changes in this direction were made, the acquisition of appropriate social behavior would no longer be considered an inferior or subsidiary goal of education. This has implications for:

1. The extent to which teachers accept responsibility for the ways in which children treat one another.
2. The development and implementation of social skills curricula.
3. The development of programs of instruction related to individual differences which would foster positive attitudes and behavior towards all other children. Teaching about differences in children would be interpreted to refer not only those previously segregated children who have physical and/or behavioral limitations, but differences of race, color, religion, and ethnicity as well.
4. The elimination of all those school practices which promote highly competitive social interaction and which decrease the probability of caring, supportive behavior among children. This would include the use of star charts or other "motivational" devices which create winners and losers, many of the competitive games which form a standard part of the curriculum, and many of the grouping procedures which divide children and create the patently obvious "low reading group."[13, 14, 15]

Increased parental involvement in all aspects of their children's education.

Many argue that most parents "don't want to be bothered"; given the current ways in which many schools treat parents, some parents do in fact choose not to become involved. However, other patterns are possible if schools were to actually solicit, encourage and respond to parental input. If, in fact, each student were to have an IEP, such involvement would be mandated. This increased involvement would have implications for:

1. The allocation of teacher time. Teachers would not be able to fulfill all their current responsibilities and meet with thirty sets of parents as well. Systems of release time or additional compensation would be required.
2. The ability of the schools to be responsive to parental concerns. It is clearly farcical to ask for parental input and then to ignore it (this treatment and its subsequent effect has lead us to conclude that parents don't care); if schools ask for parents' ideas and priorities, then schools must also be free enough and flexible enough to alter their programs to accommodate these demands.
3. Parental education and information sharing. If parents are to be asked for more than token informed consent (signing off on a piece of paper), then they must be fully informed of program options and the rationale by which decisions are made.

Increased interdisciplinary consultation and planning.

Reynolds[12] asks, "Is it not time to simplify the sociology of the schools by bringing all specialists into support roles for the basic corps of regular teachers?" (p. 114) Although every child does not require the services of every professional (counselor, school psychologist, physical therapist, etc.) many children would benefit if schools were organized so that, at the elementary level, subject matter specialists could consult with regular classroom teachers or, at the secondary level, individual teachers could pool their information and resources concerning individual children.

The extent to which schools are accountable for student outcomes.

Reynolds[12] asks whether the concepts of institutional accountability and individual responsibility for competent performance can be extended to all children. If, in fact, every student were to have an IEP, then would schools be held accountable for showing measurable progress for every student? This would clearly have implications for:

1. The specificity with which goals would be written for individual students.
2. The designation of specific individuals as responsible for these objectives.
3. The design of individualized instructional strategies.
4. The use of systematic and frequent evaluation procedures to determine the mastery of objectives.
5. Most significantly, the willingness of teachers and schools to assume the responsibility for student learning. Thus, those regular education students

who consistently receive "D's" would clearly need to have their programs re-evaluated and re-formulated. Schools would not be permitted to place the burden of student failure on students alone, and would therefore be forced to seriously re-evaluate their own teaching and procedural regulations.

IMPEDIMENTS TO CHANGE

What are the impediments to the changes just identified? What stands in the way of making regular education resemble special education?

The most obvious and immediate response to this question is likely to be "money." In a time of budget cuts, asking schools to hire more teachers, invest in smaller classes, and provide additional resources is apt to be seen as the ultimate impossibility. It is ironic that society is at the same time demanding more from education and hoping to pay less.

It is easy to stop with money and to pretend that this is the only impediment, but to do so denies the fact that schools function in many ways, within political, economic and social structures, all of which make change extremely difficult.

If, in fact, there were agreement that the schools should spend the money to provide more individualized, appropriate education for all children, a major question would remain: Would they do so?

The issue of change and schools is a complex one and has been addressed in many different ways. Silberman[17] argues that teachers and schools do things as they do because of "mindlessness" or simply because they have

never devoted sufficient thought to why they do things or to what alternatives exist. Combs[5], in his book, Myths in Education: Beliefs that Hinder Progress and Their Alternatives, argues that we are all victims of widely held beliefs which are not true, but which nonetheless guide us to behave in unproductive ways and to perpetuate and defend practices which have little success. Apple[2], on the other hand, argues that schools in actuality are doing precisely what they were intended to do, perpetuate economic and cultural reproduction and that schools in their "caughtness" with other institutions are unable to change without impinging upon greater political and economic realities.

These arguments represent a range of optimism and possibilities for change. "Mindlessness"[17] implies that one has only to expose people (teachers) to issues and encourage them to think, and practices will change. The "myths" hypothesis[5] acknowledges that practices are maintained by firmly held beliefs, and that these may be difficult to shake. The cultural reproduction argument[2] points to the fact that schoold do not exist in a vacuum and that significant change will both require and effect changes in other societal institutions as well.

Let us examine some of these ideas in terms of their relationship to the potential of P.L. 94-142 for creating wide-spread changes in all of general education.

Silberman's[17] attribution of current school practice and its resistance to change on "mindlessness" is the least sophisticated and the least helpful analysis. If in fact schools are the way they are because people haven't thought about or considered crucial issues, the very fact that certain

assumptions go unquestioned is indication of the fact that something is awry. One would have to ask: Why are certain practices accepted without questions and in whose best interest is their uncritical acceptance? Apple and King[3] state: "While there is no doubt that mindlessness does exist besides in Charles Silberman's mind, it is not an adequate descriptive device -- nor is venality or indifference -- in explaining why schools are so resistant to change or why schools teach what they do." (pp. 1-2)

One of the issues which appears relevant to the potential impact of P.L. 94-142 concerns the significance of the question: By whom is a change introduced? Hansen[8], in discussing school change states, "If change is introduced from outside the school ...the principal and teachers may view it suspiciously both because outsiders typically do not know the facts of daily life in the particular school and because change implies previous inadequacy, which threatens the educators' self-esteem." (p. 189) Sarason[16], however, points out a dilemma in this regard saying, "The agents of change from outside the school culture are too frequently ignorant of the culture in which the change is to be embedded or if they are part of the culture, they are themselves victims of that very fact." (p. 236)

In the case of the implementation of P.L. 94-142, a federal law is clearly an outside force and many school personnel have reacted by questioning both the rights and the wisdom of the federal government to make policy statements which have such direct and extensive impact on the education of <u>all</u> children.

In describing why the Sputnik-motivated educational changes were largely unsuccessful in bringing about lasting change, Sarason[16] lists three

characteristics of ineffectual change which also apply to the effect of P.L. 94-142.

> "(1) The stimulus for change came primarily from outside the school culture; (2) There was little or no attention to the characteristic regularities of the institutional culture and their possible social and psychological correlates; and (3) there seemed to be the unverbalized assumption that the goals of change could be achieved independent of any change in these regularities." (p. 36)

What are some of the behavioral regularities, traditions, practices and attitudes which obstruct a move to provide quality education for all children, and how can these be addressed?

Some of these regularities can be analyzed in terms of the myths identified by Combs.[5] Combs, for example, talks about the "Myth of a Competitive Society" which claims that the role of regular education is to prepare students for a competitive society, thus perpetuating school practices of separation, sorting and labeling. Combs argues that our society is truly a cooperative one, with considerable interpersonal dependence; he examines the adverse effects of competition on individuals and states that, "The primary goal of our public schools must be the optimal development of every child. Practices which seriously interfere with that goal must surely be examined with great care." (p. 19)

Apple[2] would argue that competition is not simply a "myth" which needs to be debunked, but rather that the sorting function of schools is an explicit sanctioned one which helps to maintain current economic structures. However, regardless of whether the myth of competition perpetuates the practice or the sorting function helps to legitimize the myth, the fact that schools do maintain and create competitive atmospheres for children is clearly incompatible with full educational opportunity.[14]

The prominent difference, however, between the Combs and Apple analyses is the level at which they perceive the problem. If the issue were truly only one of myths, then like Silberman's mindlessness argument, one has only to debunk the myth and move on. If, however, Apple's analysis is more accurate, one must ask <u>why</u> the myth developed and whose interest the maintenance of the myth serves. Changes would then have to be made at a deeper level, otherwise society (and schools) will simply invent new myths to legitimize current practices.

Another educational myth identified by Combs[5] also results in school practice not conducive to meeting the educational needs of all children. The "Democracy means treating everyone alike" myth leads schools to treat unlike individuals similarly under the guise of fairness. Combs states:

> "For at least one hundred years educators have known that meeting the needs of individual children requires personalizing instruction - fitting the curriculum to the needs of the student. Nevertheless we persist in seeking ways to fit students to the curriculum and use the equal treatment myth to justify such action." (p. 24)

When dealing with individual students, some of whom have more clearly discernable differences or more obvious educational requirements, it is difficult to determine what constitutes fairness. Is it spending equal time or money on each child regardless of need? The resolution of this dilemma has long-term political implications.

The myth of equal treatment has additional, negative ramifications. If it is presumed that: 1) It is right to treat all people equally; and 2) that we have done so, then when we perceive differences in individual

performance,"the source of inferiority is attributed to the less privileged group, not to the system of classification used and to the manipulation of opportunity by representatives of the dominant social class." (p. 85) This justification for "blaming-the-victim" further perpetuates the use of schools as sorting mechanisms; equally suspect however, are those systems of unequal treatment (even when labeled "individualization") which lead to elaborate teaching systems and result in diminished outcomes.

The Myth of Credentials[5] states that "holding special credentials insures the possessor greater wisdom or dependability." (p. 31) Combs says that such a myth often forces specialists to glorify their position and to destroy "lay" people's confidence in their abilities to deal with problems they confront. (p. 33) Combs states that the credentials myth has resulted in the organization of schools by job descriptions rather than by skill or need. He states, "A good school or school system is one which has constructed its own particular gestalt so that all workers use themselves and their skills efficiently for the education of children." (p. 33)

While P.L. 94-142 certainly supports the value of interdisciplinary planning and programming, it has in some ways worsened the problem of specialist-teacher cooperation. Because federal funds are tied to the assignment of labels, certain teachers can work only with labeled children; while a remedial reading teacher might be the perfect teacher and have the resources to work with an advanced student needing reading enrichment, such arrangements are often impossible due to state and federal regulations. Clearly, schools must, as Combs says, arrange themselves so that extensive cross-ferilization among specialists is possible and so that bureaucratic regulations do not impede the matching of students and appropriate resources.

An analysis by Sarason[16] sheds light on some of the resistance encountered by the move to re-integrate handicapped children, resistance which would be magnified by attempts to re-organize schools for maximal achievement for all children. Sarason states that all teachers face two dilemmas: at a professional level they realize that they are not able to do enough for every child in their class and that their efforts are inadequate. The personal dilemma which follows is an attempt to deal with the professional one: the personal frustration is often exacerbated by the knowledge that part of their failure to deal with all children well is an inadequacy in their own knowledge, understanding or technique. Sarason states that the prepotent response to this dilemma is to segregate certain children, a practice which is justified by the belief system that states both "certain children cannot be accommodated in the regular classroom" and "it's unfair to the majority 'regular children' to be in a class with special children."

Clearly, the mainstreaming movement attempts to contradict this justification and re-opens this dilemma for teachers, perhaps in an even more intensified manner. Federal legislation, however, does not magically change either teacher skills or attitudes. Simply returning handicapped children to the mainstream will neither 1) increase the probability that teachers will be able to teach these students effectively, or 2) change the underlying belief system which states that these students do not belong. If school doctrine were further changed to state that not only do all students belong but furthermore, each must be instructed so as to assure progress, the pressure on teachers and their frustrations would be further increased. This analysis implies that in order for schools to change, teachers' attitudes and teachers' skills

would need to be altered considerably, in addition to providing sufficient resources to insure student progress. Furthermore, teachers and other school professionals must be actively involved in planning the change process rather than simply being asked (forced) to change.

CONCLUSION

What is the probability that successful change can be implemented? Sarason[16] states, "If the more things change the more they remain the same it is because our ways of looking and thinking have not changed." (p. 236) Part of our looking and thinking which needs to change will be the way in which we look at the function of schooling and at how schools fit into the greater social and political context. Apple[1] argues that schools do indeed work; that is, they successfully serve as a sorting mechanism to fill the various levels of the work force. He states:

> "Right now schools seem to be doing in many ways what they were designed to do. Their basic structural characteristics 'teach' what has come to be called a hidden curriculum that effectively reproduces the characterological element so necessary to social and economic class differentiation ...this fact of schools being caught in a larger economic nexus makes it rather important that educational reform be seen in its larger political context." (p. 10-11)

Clearly, exploring the impact of extending P.L. 94-142 principles to all children can be likened to opening a Pandora's Box. We may be seriously threatened by what we find and the exploration of possible ramifications may force us to confront questions we feel more comfortable ignoring. What is the role of schools in our society? How much are we willing to spend to provide an appropriate education for all students, and what are the

consequences of failing to do so? What would happen if schools ceased to serve their sorting/labeling function and all children began to succeed? These are not easy questions and this paper cannot begin to answer them. Rather, the goal here is to provide a starting point for discussion and critical analysis.

If we are successful at broadening our attention from "special children" to all children, we will increase the benefits to all of society and turn P.L. 94-142 from a powerful but divisive act which separates and distinguishes to one which provides a model of a better future for all children.

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